DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 219 624 CE 033 359

AUTHOR Lutter, Judy Mahle
TITLE Coulds and Shoulds: The Dilemma.
PUB DATE Mar 82
NOTE 50p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, March 19-23, 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Development; *Adult Students; *Continuing Education; Educational Needs; Employed Women; Employment Level; Family Relationship; Females; Middle Aged Adults; *Midlife Transitions; Part Time Employment; Postsecondary Education; Self Actualization; Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Sex Role; *Student Attitudes; Student Educational Objectives; *Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS University of Minnesota

ABSTRACT

A 2-year study was conducted to examine the impact of Continuing Education for Women (CEW) at the University of Minnesota on women's lives. Using data from a 22-page questionnaire filled out by 1,134 women who had taken at least one continuing education course at the University, and in-depth personal interviews with selected participants, the study focused on the lives of women who were between the ages of 37 and 45. It was found that the average student in CEW at Minnesota is a 42-year-old woman who already possesses a bachelor's degree. Very often she is returning to explore new career and/or degree possibilities. This study also found that women aged 37-45 experienced a great deal of dissonance between old expectations and new desires. Although most still had children at home, a significant number were either working full or part time. Frustrations and problems arose because they had rarely placed personal desires first. Returning to school was often the opening wedge for many other changes. The research indicates that this group needs special support; more than any other group, they were torn between what they "should do and be" in the traditional sense, and what they "could do or be" as articulated by younger women. The dilemma may cause personal and family disruption and distress. Although life styles and family responsibilities varied, almost everyone said they wanted to be employed and were using CEW classes and counseling to help define and reach those goals. (Author/KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED219624

Coulds and Shoulds: The Dilemma[a]

Judy Mahle Lutter[b]
Measurement Services Center
University of Minnesota

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J M LUTTER

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

[a]Presentation at the symposium "Life Stages and Their Role in Programs for the Continuing Education of Women" at the 1982 Annual Convention of the American Educational Research Association, held in New York City, March 19-23, 1982.

[b]Project Coordinator for the two-year project "Assessment and Evaluation of Continuing Education for Women at the University of Minnesota." The project, together with third-year funding for innovative programming based on research findings, was supported by funding from the Northwest Area Foundation. During this time she was also conducting research on athletic women and is currently president of Melpomene Institute whose goals are to do research and disseminate information about physically active women and girls.

CE033359

Coulds and Shoulds

Judy Mahle Lutter
Measurement Services Center
University of Minnesota

Abstract

This presentation focuses on research findings concerning results from a two-year project "Assessment Evaluation of Continuing Education for Women." The objective of the study was to examine the impact this program has had on women's lives. Using data from a 22 page questionnaire and in-depth personal interviews with selected participants, the study focuses on the lives of women who are between the ages of 37-45.

The average student in Continuing Education for Women at Minnesota is a 42 year old woman who already possesses a B.A. Very often she is returning to explore new career and/or degree possibilities. This study found that women aged 37-45 experienced a great deal of dissonance between old expectations and new desires. Although most still have children at home, a significant number are either working full or part time. Frustrations and problems arise because they have rarely placed personal desires first. Returning to school is often the opening wedge for many other changes.

The research indicates that this group needs special support; more than any other they were torn between what they "should do and be" in the traditional sense, and what they "could do or be" as articulated by younger women. The dilemma may cause personal and family disruption and distress which should be recognized. Although life styles and family responsibilities varied, almost everyone said they wanted to be employed and were using CEW classes and counseling to help define and reach those goals.

COULDS AND SHOULDS: THE DILEMMA

Judy Mahle Lutter

> "My life continues to be filled with family, home, church, PTA, weaving, golf, Scouts, chauffeur, chef, coordinator, and purchasing agent. I am still waiting for a career."

The writer, a 42-year old mother of six teen-age children, capsulizes in her Christmas letter the dilemma of her contemporaries. Twenty years ago she could have proudly reported that she was the mother of six happy, bright children and the wife of a famous lawyer. A comment about her career would have raised eyebrows. In the short span of twenty years, the lifetime of Continuing Education of Women at the University of Minnesota, much as changed. This woman knows that many of those who read her letter, some her contemporaries, will wonder at her choice. Some will be sympathetic, some critical.

Research Data: Women at Midlife

What do we know about women at midlife? This question has only recently been considered worthy of study. In 1978 Levinson, in defense of selecting only the life stage patterns of men in his book, A Man for All Seasons, says, "one of the most difficult decisions was that of limiting the study to men. Ultimately, it is essential to study the development of both genders if we are to understand either. The challenge of development is at least as great for women as it is for men. They go through the same adult developmental periods as men, I believe, but in partially different ways that reflect the differences in biology and social circumstances" (Levinson, 1978, pp. 8-9).

Levinson comments further that: "the approach presented here offers a basis for the study of women, without the assumption that the two genders develop in either identical or totally different ways." He feels that

including only men was the right choice and places researchers in a better position to understand "various other populations" (Levinson, p. 9).

I think this attitude poses dangers.

Gilligan in her paper "Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle" reminds us that assuming women follow the same stages as men places women in an unfair position. The life stages of women aged 37-45 have rarely paralleled men of the same age; frequently these patterns have been very dissimilar. Boys were encouraged to be independent and achievement-oriented; girls were taught to be dependent and to always consider others' wishes and desires. Yet current thinking praises the male model, encourages women to seek their own career, and debases the lives these women have led as wives and mothers. Given these attitudes, many women are questioning old expectations. The degree of questioning often depends on age and family situation. This paper examines the issue of self identity for women 37-45 who face a more striking dilemma than either younger or older women. In a study of 1,134 women who have participated in Continuing Education for Women at the University of Minnesota, we found many women aged 37, 42, or 45 asking questions which have no easy answers. The most frequent question, often expressed by mothers whose children no longer make great demands on their time, is, "What am I going to do with the rest of my life?" It is part of a more fundamental question, "Who am I?"

How do most women, aged 37-45 answer? Lillian Rubin, in gathering data for her book, Women of a Certain Age: The Midlife Search for Self, asked 160 women, half employed outside the home, the question: "I wonder if you could briefly describe yourself in some way that would give me a good sense of who and what you are?" Most found it difficult to provide an easy answer. Rubin reported that after an initial uncomfortable silence, followed by a description

of their physical appearance, the women struggled to find appropriate words.

> "Almost always the words they use are those that stereotypically define feminine personality: warm, sensitive, kind, outgoing, considerate, caring, concerned, responsible. And almost always the words 'mother' and 'wife' are included in the list. So far, no surprises. That, after all, is how women generally are defined, therefore how they define themselves. Moreover, those are qualities that merit pride, so why not display them? No reason. But these were long, open ended discussions - plenty of time, plenty of encouragement for a woman to give a more rounded picture of herself. Yet, few did. Most striking was the fact that, although half the women talked to hold paid jobs outside the home, not one - including those who work at high level professional jobs - described herself in relation to her work. . . Not one said, 'I'm a teacher, I'm a psychologist, I'm a seamstress, I'm a personnel manager, I'm a lawyer.' Few included the words competent or capable in their definition of self" (Rubin, 1979, pp. 54-55).

When Rubin further questioned working women as to why they didn't describe themselves in relationship to work, they usually concluded, after much thought, that work was what they did. They did not feel it was a primary descriptor of who they were. As they struggled for this definition they spoke to a fundamental theme in women's identity. This distinction between doing and being is viewed differently by men.

Characteristics of Men at Mid Life

Men of the same age who were asked the same identity questions found it easy to answer. It was an issue that had been settled following adolescence, when a boy's decision about what he would do seemed the primary ingredient in who he would be. Those men with commitments to upward mobility and achievement are particularly likely to have a sense of identity closely related to what they do. Almost without exception men in this age group responded to the question, "describe yourself", with a description which varied only in detail. The men said something like:"I am a professor, my specialty is sociology. In the past six years I have been actively engaged in field research in the Andes."

Only rarely did they mention roles or relationship with family.

Being a husband or father is not considered central to a man's definition of self. "For him, there is not being without doing. For her, it works the other way. All her life, she's been expected to be - be good, be pretty, be patient, be kind, be loving. To be - the quintessence of woman."

Carol Gilligan also described the difference between male and female definitions of self throughout the life cycle. She highlighted data collected by others (Chodorow, 1971; Erikson, 1967 and Lever, 1976) in presenting a strong case for the different socialization of girls and boys. Each of these authors indicated that a boy's development is directed toward separation and individuation whereas a girl's development focuses on attachments and relationships. In all these analyses, Gilligan found a judgmental bias, which is, I think, at the heart of the dilemma for a midlife woman. That bias, that assumption, is that the male model is the better one. Gilligan said, "The male model seems in any event, more adaptive." Lever pointed out that the male model fits the requirements described by Rusman (1961) for success in modern corporate life. In contrast, the interpersonal skills, the sensitivity and care which girls develop during their primarily dyadic play relationship have little market value and may even impede professional success. The message is clear: "given the realities of adult life, if a girl does not want to be left dependent on men, she will have to learn to play like a boy" (Gilligan, 1979, p. 445).

Options for Midlife Women - Is the Male Model Possible or Desirable?

Gilligan argued that aping men's life stages is not the only, or even the best, solution. Gilligan's work is representative of a growing number of female researchers and writers who are beginning to question the male world. They would be far less critical of the 42 year-old woman quoted at the outset,

and would urge her to consider her options.

Attempting to imitate the male model where a sense of identity is based on work and accomplishments growing out of a career, is problematic, if not impossible, for a woman in her late thirties and early forties. For one thing, the woman who has accepted the primary responsibility for the care of husband, children and home has had little time or encouragement to advance in her own career. Even women who work outside the home when children are young, rarely have seen their jobs as a career worthy of effort and cultivation. Women of this age, even those with college degrees, never developed long range goals related to work. Traditionally, a married woman has worked "to help out" or "meet expenses." She has rarely admitted that she is working in order to establish her own identity or forge a significant career.

How can researchers possibly equate success for men and women when success has been defined along very different sexual standards? For the past century, a woman's future has been essentially determined by who she married.

Marriage and family therefore became crucial to her source of identity. Her success was measured by the achievements of those she nurtured and supported, not by personal achievements. Indeed the woman who tried to combine marriage, children and career was widely criticized for short-changing her family.

Many of us can recall hearing more than once a statement like:

"Johnny's smoking behind the garage again but what do you expect. . . his mother works, you know."

"I don't think Alice knows what her children are doing. She's too involved with other things to really give them enough attention."

Surprisingly, fathers have not been equally blamed for their children's problems. Can you imagine the implication that Johnny is smoking because his father works!

Employment Outside the Home - Possibilities and Problems

Today more than half of the women in the United States are working for pay. Of the work force aged 37-45, 63.6% are women. An increasing number of working women seek meaningful careers rather than a dead-end job which has only monetary rewards. As a result many have returned to school to finish programs begun earlier, earn specialized degrees, or take advantage of career development courses. Although the transition may be difficult and good jobs hard to find, the option is attracting many midlife women.

Yet new options create new problems. These women knew that any drastic changes they made would also affect the lives of many others. The risk of giving up a life built on 15-20 years of being a wife and mother was sometimes too great. Some chose to stay at home; others returned to work which produced further dilemmas.

As Ellen Goodman in her 1979 book Turning Points comments:

> People are not suffering so much from what Alvin Toffler called overchoice as from having to make the tough choices. There are inevitable conflicts even in the most "liberated" life-styles and psyches. Recently a friend called to tell me about a job offer she had turned down. It would have meant so many nights and weekends away from her family. Hers wasn't the "old conflict," an exclusively female problem. In her shared life, it was one which her husband suffered from as well. This wasn't even a problem imposed upon her by the attitudes of the world or her family, but, rather, by her desires. On the one hand, she would have loved the challenge of the new job, but on the other hand, she wanted the time with her family. There were, there are, limits and choices to be made (p. 288).

Women's Life Stages: The Need for Further Research

Given evidence that women themselves put relationships first, it is perhaps not surprising that few studies have concentrated on women's life stages or women's identity.

In 1974, Veryheyden-Hilliard commented that:

> Whether mother worked, whether she stayed at home, whether she earned too much money, whether she ignored or smothered her children, whether she did whatever she did has almost always been researched as to the effect of her activity on some other. Research is needed on the woman herself. What are women like who successfully carry out a dual role? How did they get that way? What has negative effects on her? What "works" for her? What can we learn that will help other women? Are there models and guidelines for the successful development of parallel growth of family and career life for women which can be filtered out and made available for other women's consideration? Perhaps more than descriptive research, we need to know the hows and whys of women's different life styles and roles.
>
> Research on women--as differentiated from the effects of their activities on others--has been a very scarce commodity and in no way reflective of the fact that women represent more than half of the population, all of the wives and mothers, and 40 percent of the country's work force (pp. 37-38).

RESEARCH ON MIDLIFE WOMEN: PARTICIPANTS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

Women were the focus of research recently completed at the University of Minnesota. In this presentation, I shall provide evidence gathered from questionnaire responses and interview data which speak to the dilemmas faced by midlife women. This data supports the thesis that women in the middle age group, those aged 37-45, experience the most conflict between old expectations and new desires. I will present evidence that they are often torn between what they should do and be, in the traditional sense, and what they could do or be, as articulated by younger women.

Method

Questionnaire Study

The entire Minnesota study involved women who ranged from 18-89. Participants in the study were selected because they had had at least one experience with continuing education for women at the University of Minnesota in its 20 year history. The questionnaire study, completed by 1,134 women, included

hundreds of items pertaining to women's goals, expectations and experiences.

Data Analysis - Questionnaires

All questionnaire responses were key-punched directly from questionnaires to computer cards. Data were then transferred to internal disc storage at the University Computer Center. All statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages, and when appropriate, response means ($\bar{x}$'s) and standard deviations (SD's) were calculated for each item on the questionnaire. Pearson product moment correlations were calculated to describe relationships among pairs of items. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and *t*-tests were performed to look at differences among groups of respondents and their answers to selected items on the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of this analysis women were divided into three age groups: 25-36 (N=176), 37-45 (N=212) and 46-60 (N=513). The largest percentage of women not included in these age groups were older than sixty. We selected 31 questions from the 97 item questionnaire which we thought might differentiate between these groups.

Interviews

Twenty-nine women participated in the interview study which was designed to explore in depth the question: "What impact has Continuing Education for Women had on your life?" Recommendations from CEW staff, advisory board, students and the counseling staff resulted in a list of 67 names, including annotations on year of contact with the program, marital and work status.

Using this knowledge, the list of 36 names was reduced to include women who had participated in each of the 5 year periods of CEW's existence. The final list included women in every decade from 20-70. Ten of the twenty-nine

women were between 37 and 45 years old at the time of the interview. An additional five had been in this age group when they initially contacted the program.

For five months, from November 1979 through March 1980, I interviewed these women in places of their choosing and at a time convenient to them. Most interviews lasted an hour and a half. I took notes during the interview and made a tape recording using my notes and adding additional thoughts and information as soon as the interview was completed.

Each woman shaped her own interview, although I had some specific questions to give structure and similarity to the data I collected. My own pattern was that of earning a college degree, teaching to support my graduate-school husband, staying at home to have a baby, starting back to graduate school myself with small children and a psychologically supportive but not helpful spouse. This pattern was also described by many of those I interviewed. The fact that I shared my own experience with those women I interviewed opened doors and encouraged sharing that would have been different had the researcher been male, or single, or younger.

After all twenty-nine interviews were completed, I separated my information into six major categories: CEW experiences, educational objectives and plans, jobs, self-image, family, and friends. I guaranteed anonymity by changing each name, as well as significant details which might personally identify a woman. Before the final copy was written, I sent each participant a copy of her story plus one other and invited her to respond and make changes as desired.

Background Characteristics

It is important to note that the women who participated in the study were not representative of all women in midlife. They differed from a general population in terms of education, race and income. The mean age of respondents

in the entire sample was 48. They were predominantly white women with median household incomes of about $35,000. Almost three-fourths (73%) of the women started college immediately after high school; another 47 women (4%) started vocational school. When they contacted the program, 51% of the women had completed a four-year college degree, or a more advanced degree.

Demographic characteristics were often closely linked to age and were an important baseline for describing our data. Younger women for example were more likely to be single, working for pay and without children. Older women were usually married, working as volunteers, and mothers of grown children.

Demographics - Women in Midlife

Midlife women showed differences which were statistically significant on several demographic descriptors. Women aged 37-45 were significantly different in marital status ($p \leq .001$). Women at midlife included the largest percentage (14.7%) of divorced women, as compared with 9.8% for younger and 9.6% for older women. A small percentage, 4.3%, considered themselves single while the majority of midlife women, 77.7% were married.

Household incomes also showed statistically significant differences ($p \leq .001$). Women in this age group were much more affluent than the younger group and almost paralleled the older group. Different life styles and options were suggested by the fact that 58.5% of the women in the youngest group reported family incomes of $29,999 or less as compared with 31.9% of midlife women and 30.8% of those in the oldest grouping. Ten percent of midlife women reported household incomes in excess of $100,000. Individual incomes for midlife women were, however, much lower. Of those reporting

individual income, 62.5% earned less than $15,000; an additional 32.9% earned between $15,000 and $30,000. The highest personal income, reported by one woman, was in the $50,000 - $59,000 range.

These differences became particularly important for those midlife women considering divorce. Many realized that they would have a difficult time finding lucrative jobs even though their educational levels were high. Midlife women had slightly higher education levels than the other two groups; twenty-nine percent had a four year college degree, an additional 16.2% had some graduate or professional school and 15.7% had a Master's degree.

The Role of Education - Reasons for Taking a CEW Class:

Our concern in this presentation is to describe how women evaluated Continuing Education for Women courses with a view toward suggesting appropriate educational offerings for midlife women in other settings. Degree goals, including completing a degree, starting on a degree program, and assessing the difficulty of college level work, were not important. This reflected the previous academic training of this sample. In this respect they were unlike their contemporaries described in other studies, who usually have had a year or less of college. We surmize that the University attracts fewer midlife women without college expeirence because the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Community is also served by numerous junior colleges and an experimental University which actively recruits this population.

For the women in our study the major reasons for choosing a course were to achieve a greater sense of personal identity, improve job skills, and obtain practical information. On only two items did midlife women respond in a significantly different manner for choosing courses than younger or older women. Interestingly, both were related to employment which midlife women find to be a major issue. Sixty two percent said that to "increase my chances to qualify for a new job or occupation" was important to extremely important.

Responses of midlife women were similar to the younger group, where 69.2% cited this as an important reason to enroll. In contrast, only 44.1% of older women saw increasing job options as an important factor. Similar patterns were observed in answer to the question "an important reason for taking a course is to qualify for a new job or occupation." Since more younger women were currently employed and were more career-oriented this option was more important to them.

Only two of the midlife women I interviewed were using CEW courses to qualify for a salary increase or job promotion. Martha was single and had worked continuously except for a one-year interlude when she took a sabbatical to complete her M.A.

Anne, an officer at a local bank, first learned about CEW at time when she was appraising her future. Her bank seemed reluctant to move her to middle and upper management levels, although she watched men younger and less capable receive promotions. Anne's bank encouraged employees to take courses, and Anne had always taken every specialized banking course she could. A CEW course titled "Strategies for Moving Up", offered at noon, caught her eye. She enrolled; the bank gave her released time and paid her fees, probably unaware that she was unhappy and ready to look at other options.

Anne found the course valuable. She reassessed other possibilities, yet two obstacles prevented her from making a major shift. She was now thirty-eight and divorced with two teenaged children. Her current job paid well. Her experience in banking was excellent, but would that be accepted by other companies? What kinds of risks were involved? Would all of her experience compensate for the fact that she didn't have that BA? Happily, two bank officials who had blocked her progress because she was a woman

left the bank within this time period. When other officials learned that Anne was looking elsewhere, they examined her worth and decided she should be encouraged to remain. She was promoted and given responsibilities commensurate with her skills.

Anne stands out in this group as a woman whose career is the dominant factor in her life; she holds a position of influence and power. She still receives the CEW bulletin but finds nothing in the business offerings which are at her level. "The classes are directed at women who are ten or more years behind me in terms of career," she observed. She is also pleased that courses like "There's a Woman in the Men's Room", "Competition", and "Stress Management" are available now, because she doesn't want other women to have to struggle through all of that on their own.

Anne was somewhat unique in this sample of midlife women. The next person interviewed was more typical. Jan's story highlights many of the issues involving work, school and family obligations which make choices so difficult.

Jan, still dressed in her robe, poured her second cup of morning coffee and ruefully admitted she was "the last of a dying breed, the suburban mother." Even five years ago, she recalled that her role was considered important, even ideal. Today many of her friends are critical when she remains at home.

For Jan, staying home was a conscious decision based on some experiences which are shared by many midlife women. Somewhat dissatisfied at home when all her children started school, Jan decided to see what the University of Minnesota could offer. Because she didn't have any definite plans, she talked with a counselor who encouraged her to take a psychology course. One

of the course requirements was to interview someone at the Counseling Bureau on the subject of future possibilities. "I was fairly excited and encouraged by the course, so I approached the interview with anticipation. Maybe the counselor was being honest and describing the facts of life, but she said with my past grades graduate school was out of the question. She also almost ridiculed my desire to return "at my age." I was only forty-one at the time. I didn't consider myself ancient or hopeless but I wasn't overly confident either, and that interview helped me decide not to attempt graduate school."

Instead Jan took numerous psychology courses and earned straight A's. She felt this improved her own self image, partially due to her children's reactions.

Jan's five children ranged in age from eight to sixteen. Their reactions were similar to those reported in the questionnaire data. Her older children were the most supportive and enthusiastic. They often studied at the same time and commiserated at the time of exams. Her oldest son, then a sophomore at a prestigeous Eastern college, said he bragged about his mother's grades and broadened areas of interest and knowledge. He urged her to start that graduate degree.

While Jan's kids came around and felt that education was not only good for Mom but something that was important for them, Jan's husband, Stan, was pleased that at the moment Jan had no major plans. Although he didn't object to her taking classes at the University, he was fearful that it might alter his life style. "Basically, he's not terribly secure; new things are difficult for him. He sees younger men at the office who are sharing responsibility for the children, and he doesn't really want that. When I first took a course it scared him. Several of our friends have been divorced

recently, and I think he thought I would enjoy the freedom so much I'd run away."

Several years after her first course, Jan made a move that surprised everyone. She decided to take a civil service test to qualify for a library job. One of the things that amazed her was the educational level of others taking the test. "Everyone had at least a BA," she recalled. At first Jan wondered why so many qualified women would want a part-time job paying $3.40 an hour, with no benefits, no vacation, and no prestige. "But when I was told I'd been accepted for the job, I was almost excited. I knew I had scored better than many other women and figured I should certainly give it a try."

"My hours were 10-2, five days a week. 'Perfect,' I thought, 'I'll have a chance to be out doing something interesting, but I'll still be home for the kids.' I didn't know four hours a day could be so tedious--I knew the job backward and forward in one week. I never even got a coffee break, no one appreciated what I did, and I no longer had time for friends and family."

"They exploit women," she said, growing a little angry. "One friend has worked for them for seven years and virtually runs the place, but because she won't work full time, they won't promote her. She earned the same hourly wage as I did."

Still, Jan had been taught that quitting in some sense admitted failure, and so she decided to stick it out for a year or so. At Christmas her husband got his annual bonus, and she got her W-2 recording her total income for the year. His bonus check was larger. She quit.

"Why be so frustrated," she reasoned, "and maybe have less sense of myself for so little in return?" Jan resisted external pressures to find

another paying job. She volunteered for a crisis center and thought about earning an advanced degree. Yet she also resented the fact that everyone felt she had ulterior motives if she took a class and wished people could accept the fact that life-long learning is a worthwhile reason. She didn't really think she wanted to start work when the children left home, but since much of her life had revolved around her family, she thought she should make some plans.

The dilemma of planning, particularly one's own personal future, is very real for midlife women. Their answers to questionnaire items concerning family and spouse highlighted these difficulties. While midlife women face fewer barriers related to pregnancy or child care, the fact that most of the women in this study had spent at least ten years identifying themselves primarily as wives and mothers had its own particular consequences.

Indeed, many had postponed desires to return to school until their families were established. Because midlife and older women have made such a commitment to family, the psychological support they receive from family members is crucial. When asked a series of questions concerning their feelings about relationships and support given for returning to school, 69.6% of midlife women said they were satisfied or very satisfied when they first considered returning to school in contrast to 82.3% who were satisfied or very satisfied at the time of our study. Responses given by older and younger women were not significantly different. The results suggest a probable positive effect for all women on marital satisfaction related to returning to school, although our data does not allow us to make cause-effect statements.

Although respondents reported changes in their marital satisfaction, there were few indications that the typical woman experienced changes in the

level of psychological support from their spouse/significant other. Women also reported that psychological support was more common than actually assuming household chores. Women in the total group reported that they did 90% of all household chores. Because of the complexity of the data, it was not separately analyzed for midlife women. However, it seems safe to suggest that this trend was more pronounced for midlife women as they were more likely to report doing over twenty hours of housework in a typical week than any other group ($p \leq .001$).

The complex question of a spouse's feelings were discussed in every interview. Children complicated the issue of family responsibilities which midlife women found hardest to solve.

Carolyn, who returned to school to earn her PhD found that while it lifted the full uneasiness and purposelessness that had pervaded her housewifely activities, it also created new tensions and raised new questions.

"Why," said her oldest son, aged ten, and her husband, "must we wait for dinner? Where are my socks? I've lost an important paper." Like many women, Carolyn was faced with the problem of support that was not really supportive. Her husband had encouraged her return to school; he had noticed with pleasure that CEW classes made her a more interesting person. She was happier. But he had not expected graduate school to start impinging on his life style. At first, Carolyn carefully arranged all her classes so that she would be home when her son arrived. After a year, however, it was obvious that some seminars required for PhD candidates were offered at five p.m., the hour preferred by young, unmarried, or childless graduate students. After a while, Carolyn resented the necessity to leap for her car as soon as the formal presentation ended. She longed to join the gang for a beer and continued discussion. Lengthy papers also intruded on family time. Professors

made no allowances for two weeks of chicken pox, visiting in-laws, or a command performance at a company party.

Carolyn and her family worked through these changes, although not without difficulty. Others like Laura and Nancy finally chose divorce.

Laura had always promised herself she would go back to school. She had made inquiries when the children were still quite young, but the obstacles seemed insurmountable. Even if sitters had been available, she knew finances would be a problem. Worrying about money and family responsibilities delayed Laura's return to school, but the major factor was the attitude of Laura's husband, John.

"At first," says Laura, "he laughed. He didn't believe I was serious or that it might be important. But he knew I was discontented and becoming less pleasant to be around, so he acquiesced. He told me quite seriously, however, to be sure school didn't interfere with my real responsibilities!"

So, like many women, Laura felt guilty about taking a course. She made all the arrangements for child care and studied when no one else was around. No one expressed an interest in what she was doing. She made light of it in social situations because she knew others would not understand or be sympathetic. She liked CEW because the classes were scheduled when her children were in school, and the women she met there understood and shared her problems and dilemmas.

Two of the women she met in those classes remained special friends; all three became divorced. "My husband finally was just too threatened," recalled Laura. "I think he realized my education was strengthening latent feminist attitudes. He could see that he was losing the servant he needed."

Before her divorce, Laura took only one course a quarter because she really did not want to "rock the boat." When she saw that personal growth was impossible in the marriage and made that break, she also made the

decision to return to school full time.

Nancy also tried to be sure that taking a class didn't disrupt anyone's schedule. She continued to keep an immaculate house, cook good meals, and make few demands on her family. But when her husband was offered a promotion which would mean another major geographical move, Nancy refused. "I didn't realize until that moment that our relationship meant that I would have to stop growing and changing. The person I was becoming no longer fit into our marriage. I realized I had to change and that he could never accept the changes. But I wasn't prepared for divorce either."

Although none of the women thought divorce would be a panacea, most were unprepared for the pressures and frustrations that resulted. All but two received custody of their children. The financial and psychological problems connected with becoming the single responsible parent added new burdens to the pressures of school or employment. They found support from other CEW women in similar circumstances.

So far, our data support the fact that midlife women are concerned with relationships and usually place perceived family needs above their own. The fact that this group had a significantly larger number of divorces highlighted the struggle that many were having with personal identity. This whole issue is a crucial one in the dilemma for midlife women. Their questionnaire answers to "How would you describe yourself?", reported in Table 1, were significantly different from the other two age groups. We presented eight descriptors and asked respondents to check as many as they wished. It was therefore quite possible for a woman to check "homemaker" and/or "mother," "working part time for pay at a job that requires a college degree," and "working as a volunteer."

Insert Table 1 about here

A total of 58.5% of midlife women chose homemaker/mother to describe themselves as compared with 38.9% of younger women and 65.7% of older women. Midlife women were also in a position between the other two groups, as 24.1% said they were working full time for pay at a job that requires a college degree. A total of 41.2% of midlife women were working full time and 33.3% were working part time. Thirty percent also said they were working as a volunteer as compared with 39.8% of older women and 19.4% of the younger.

Interests, Activities, and Attitudes

A portrait of these women's interests and activities explains the complexity of their lives and their search for self. One questionnaire item, titled "interests and activities," included options such as reading newspapers and magazines, attending sports events, doing things with others in the family, working for pay, and working as a volunteer. Responses pointed out some interesting similarities and differences among the age groups that we have been considering.

All three groups gave similar responses to describe the amount of time they spent reading books, watching television, visiting friends, social activities, attending sports events, participating in an athletic activity, and attending classes. On 9 of the 17 items, however, women aged 37-45 gave responses which were statistically different ($p \leq .001$) from responses given by younger and older women. On two of these items their responses were similar to younger women: reading books and magazines and attending movies. Their response indicating the amount of time they spent studying was similar to the older group. On the seven remaining items midlife women's responses were unique.

Midlife women spent significantly more time studying, doing housework and doing things with other family members ($p \leq .001$). They spent less time taking care of children than the younger group and were less likely to attend movies or cultural events than either younger or older women. Interview data

suggested that these women still prefer to concentrate their personal activities into the time when children are in school and their spouse is at work. This is a major factor in selecting CEW with its heavy daytime scheduling, over other educational options.

While family responsibilities still occupied a major share of a midlife woman's time, more than half were also working outside the home in excess of twenty hours a week. In addition they were more likely than any other group to be employed 11-20 hours. Fewer than one-quarter reported that they worked outside the home less than one hour per week. These statistics put them clearly in the middle of the three groups in terms of employment. These differences may in some way account for difference in hours spent doing volunteer work, where older women were more likely to indicate that they spend 1-10 hours in volunteer work. Among midlife women, 56.7% reported that they spent less than an hour working as a volunteer. ($p<.001$) Most of the midlife women I interviewed had a great deal to say about volunteering. A large percentage had filled major volunteer positions, as PTA president, Girl Scout cookie chairman, or head of the women's group at the church. Often those positions filled the need to be doing something worthwhile with the hours freed from child care. But increasingly these women reported frustration; a major reason was that volunteerism was regarded as not important by women as well as men in the working world.

Given the options of volunteer work, returning to school, or seeking employment, the majority of midlife women in our study chose the latter two.

Attitudes: Opinions

The uniqueness of women at midlife however was much more strikingly shown by their responses to attitude items. Some of the questions were straightforward. An example is, "I feel women should have equal opportunities for careers, and I have questioned my lifestyle and goals." Others complicated the issues, i.e.,

"If a woman has children, her career should be interrupted while raising them."

Responses of the midlife group showed statistically significant differences on all fifteen items. Comparisons among the three age groups are contained in Table 2. On fourteen opinions, their responses were unique. Only one statement, "I believe I could be successful in several careers" elicited responses which were similar to the younger group.

Insert Table 2 about here

All of the respondents in this study gave answers which might be unusual for a less educated population. Many opinions reflected their early academic training and subsequent exposure to "young ideas." For example, 93% of the older women said they agreed or strongly agreed that "women should have equal opportunities for careers," 95.7% of midlife women and 97.1% of younger women also answered in this manner. The groups showed statistically significant differences only in the degree of their response. More midlife women than either of the other groups were likely to check "strongly agree" on this career choice item.

Similar percentages of all groups said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "I do not feel women should seek paid employment." Fifty percent of midlife women said they did not prefer to follow traditional roles, 23.4% said they were neutral, and more than a quarter said that that remained their life style choice. In the same vein, 13.9% of midlife women said they did not receive their primary satisfaction from their own accomplishments but rather from those of others who were close to them. This was an attitude more frequently expressed by older women which highlighted their role as wife and mother. They found it much easier to be proud of a daughter's high grades and a husband's promotion than to be singled out personally in any way. One

older woman who had received an honorary degree from her college in recognition of significant volunteer work belittled her skills and gave credit to her family.

While definition of self apart from the family was still difficult for midlife women, 86.7% of the group said they have questioned their lifestyle and goals and this questioning stance often made answering the complex problems more difficult. Age and experience were also important factors. Three-fourths of younger women, for example, agreed or strongly agreed that "I think it is possible to have a fully satisfying life without having children." Far fewer midlife women (52.3%) chose this response; older women were even less likely (43.2%) to consider this a possibility. The different life stages and the reality of experiences certainly was an important factor here. Most women who have had children felt it had enriched their lives, yet many have been resocialized to believe that it would be possible to have a fully satisfying life without them.

Some, like Jo, who was one of the early participants of CEW in 1963, spoke with feeling about the changing attitudes. "Had the social climate been different," she said, "I would probably have pursued an advanced degree and academic career immediately after receiving my B.A. I might have been the quintessential professional woman." Divorced in her early forties, with three teenagers, she found a good job but realized she would have a far better position had she not taken time out. Yet she, like most of the older women interviewed would also caution the young to carefully evaluate this decision and not necessarily buy into the male model and definition of success and self-identity. "My children, now grown, remain a vital part of who I am," said Jo. "Their father who was busily pursuing his career never really knew them. At fifty-five looking at the results of our choices, I think mine has more positive points."

Jo, like many midlife women, would offer no universal answer to the dilemma of career and children. In our questionnaire study 19.5% of midlife women thought if a woman chose a career and had children, she should interrupt that career to raise them, 36.6% of older women agreed, as compared with only 12.5% of younger women.

In other areas, midlife and older women have changed expectations. While 13.9% still felt that a woman should always consult her spouse before making a personal decision, only 1.4% felt that a woman should be totally responsible for the care of the house. As in other opinion questions, a certain irony exists which underlines the dilemma; these women still do most of the housework. And, although they may feel women should have equal job opportunities, this had been the case for virtually none of the midlife women in this study!

Although in the interviews many of the women admitted to feeling different from their contemporaries who remained at home, many were not sure they would want to be the chief wage earner and some balked at being defined as a feminist. Questionnaire responses to these questions showed interesting differences here. Midlife women more often agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I think of myself as being a feminist" than any other group. Of midlife women, 66.7% agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 63.4% of younger women and 48.7% of older women.

Self-Perception

While midlife women wrestled with new ideas and complexities in their lives, similar responses given by women of all ages underlined the generally positive feeling aobut self that was typical of those who participated in the CEW program at Minnesota. The majority of women, for example, had not felt

that they were more confident about themselves, had more focus and direction in their lives, or were better able to relate to people because of experiences with CEW. The majority of women agreed or strongly agreed, however, that they had more options and alternatives available to them, and that they had explored new ideas about the roles of women. They also felt that they assessed their interests and abilities more realistically. Negative factors, described in the items "I am no longer sure of my goals in life," and "I feel more restless and discontented with my life," had not been the result of CEW experiences. Table 3 contains the comparisons among responses of the three age groups.

Insert Table 3 about here

When asked what impact CEW had on their openness to new ideas and sense of personal identity as a woman, responses of women at midlife were similar to the younger group in feeling it had made them more open, ($p \leq .001$) and were like older women in saying their sense of personal identity as a woman had increased ($p \leq .01$). Women aged 37-45 were less likely to feel better educated than older women as a result of the program experience, and more likely than younger. These findings suggest that midlife and younger women who take continuing education classes already view themselves as open to new ideas. Because midlife and older women were socialized to place family needs first, however, certain CEW classes which explore changing expectations receive heavy enrollment. One such course, "Woman, A Sense of Identity" has been offered since 1974. It was the course most often mentioned by midlife women in questionnaires and interviews as helping them redefine self in relationship to others.

Rosemary heard about CEW from a friend who had taken "A Sense of Identity."

"It saved my life," says Rosemary. "The class seemed simple at first but it put me in touch with myself and what I want out of life. We learned to reach out in that class and many of us formed close friendships. We learned to take risks."

For many, this class and others similar in content serve a counseling function for midlife women who usually have not used counseling and program advising service provided by the University. Those who used counseling services said that they sought help clarifying educational and vocational goals and assessing academic interests. Midlife women who sought counseling were more likely than any other group to say that they needed moral support. Most felt that other issues, including coping with career and family responsibilities or dealing with significant others, were problems they preferred to work out themselves. On the other hand, women who had a course instructor who was also a member of the counseling staff were more likely to seek individual counseling and recommend it to friends.

The profile that emerges from this set of data indicates that women aged 37-45 feel that CEW has influenced them positively in many ways. They have learned about, and become more sensitive to, new ideas which have frequently included new concepts of what is appropriate for women.

DISCUSSION

National statistics indicate that women now represent 52% of those enrolled in postsecondary institutions. Midlife women as described in the literature and the Minnesota CEW study represent a unique group with special needs and characteristics. The most crucial factors for those planning educational programs may be summarized as follows.

Personal Characteristics

Women who sought further education at midlife were motivated to make some changes in their lives. Most of them had been married. Divorced women represented 14.7% of the questionnaire sample and more than half of those interviewed. Almost all were mothers whose children were ages 6-21. The largest group had children ages 11-15 and the next largest group ages 16-21.

Complexity was a major theme in the lives of midlife women. As women, we often despair of the complexity—the necessity to be organizer, chef, chauffeur, teacher, housekeeper, and nurse; we are further diminished by the widely held male view that sssumes that staying at home and raising children is really not very difficult. Until recently, however, women received accolades for being the perfect mother and wife; today it is the successful career woman who wins acclaim. She has become the role model for the young.

The midlife group seemed particularly vulnerable to changing attitudes about women. They were socialized to be wives and mothers but eduated to "contribute to the world." Unlike their mothers or even women ten years older, they did not find that volunteer work fulfilled these expectations.

As a result, these women, frustrated in the role of wife and mother, sought ways to change that situation. For some, divorce preceded the return to school; for most, CEW was an exploratory step toward self-definition. Good grades and the supportive atmosphere of their classes helped them re-assess their abilities and talents. A new self-image of oneself as competent and capable of personal achievement, however, was often in conflict with a spouse's expectations.

Personal change was often not as difficult as the changes demanded of others, especially if children were still at home. Certain assumptions were no longer comfortable or workable. When a mother becomes a serious student or employee she is no longer as free to bake cookies, clean house, chauffeur

children, or, more importantly, be there at times that were previously shared. To a large extent, the women in our study thought this produced positive results; children learned to cook and clean, and so did husbands, although less frequently. Time together became more precious and often more meaningful. But it was also true that most of the women I interviewed felt guilty and questioned the amount of time that they were spending on themselves. As Ellen Goodman wrote in her book Turning Points:

> We believe in the independence of family members and the importance of the family unit. We value both self-realization -- the quest for individual growth -- and self sacrifice -- the virtue of doing for others. We need the warmth, the safety and security of traditions and roots on the one hand, and desire the excitement of risk, adventure, and exploration on the other...these ambivalences provide the tension in our society which is both dynamic and unsettling (Goodman, 1979, pp. 287-288).

While the ambivalence Goodman described remains unsolved for most, a new sense of self and a desire to be more than a mother and wife created tensions which sometimes resulted in divorce. As one woman poignantly said, "I was happily married but unhappy with myself." They often admitted that they hoped their husbands would not only accept the changes in the women they had married but also help facilitate those changes by accepting new roles and responsibilities themselves.

When husbands refused to change, there were two options. Older women were more likely to decide that they would remain married but seek additional independence. Midlife women also frequently made that choice. Others, perhaps more independent, more angry, with more traditional husbands, decided that the choice was between self and marriage!

CEW provided direction for many women. In CEW classes they found not only intellectual stimulation but women who shared their concerns and questions, as well as their dreams for the future. The frustrations involved in being a wife and mother were often dissipated by becoming a student, and our research

data confirms that belief. All of the women in our study knew that they were good students. Even if they had not had outstanding grades in their first exposure to college many years earlier, most quickly gained self-confidence by earning almost straight A's. Most of the Minnesota sample were not degree-oriented, so, when asked to describe why they wanted to take a course, choices like "to earn degree credits" were not important for the great majority. Items related to intellectual and personal growth were listed as important, very important, or extremely important by 60% of all groups. Many of these concerns were answered in CEW classes.

Our experiences also indicated that many women needed only simple information, clearly stated. They became understandably frustrated by the University's complexity. To answer this need, two staff members wrote "Its Not Just for Kids: A Reentry Woman's Handbook," a culmination of several years of research by one team member. Both authors were reentry women who pooled their knowledge gained from academic experience and work within the University system. Although the information was specific to the University of Minnesota, it provided an excellent outline for other institutions.

Two additions to the program at Minnesota which grew out of the research data were designed to answer the criticisms that CEW did not provide enough direction in deciding on educational goals or enough help in securing employment. One innovation was the creation of separate orientation sessions specifically designed for 3 groups of women: 1) those exploring the possibility of higher education; 2) those seeking degrees and 3) those seeking to link education with employment.

Throughout our research we found indications that employment was a crucial issue for midlife women. Questionnaire responses on the items "I am taking courses to increase my chances to qualify for a new job or occupation

or to qualify for a salary increase and/or job promotion" highlight the possible ways of answering the dilemma of coulds and shoulds given by midlife women. Some decided that staying at home was the most workable choice, 23.9% of these women said increasing chances for a new job were not important. Others made different decisions; 40.5% said increasing their chances for a job was a very or extremely important reason for them to take a calss. Qualifying for a salary increase was not important for 44.3% of midlife women and very or extremely important for 28.3%. Looking at available data, it is clear that many of these woman hope to reenter the job market and are not yet in a position to consider increases in salary.

Many women felt that CEW courses in career and life planning were an important component of a program for women. They cited changing expectations and lack of earlier opportunity as reasons for special classes taught by and for women. They also said that these classes do not go far enough. Many women finish degrees or update competencies with the expectation that this will increase possibilities for employment commensurate with education and experience. They are often disappointed.

In an attempt to increase women's options, an experiential program was offered in spring quarter, 1981 to provide a stronger link between life and career planning and employment. The primary focus of "Project Awareness" was to facilitate a mature woman's employment options at levels commensurate with her skills and abilities. Since the main objective for these women was to gain practical experience, selection of the job site was very important. Sites were chosen in both the private and public sector to provide a variety of experiences and to encourage women to look toward business and industry. On-site supervisors were an important element in the success of the program.

The project also incorporated a weekly seminar to provide knowledge and information on topics of concern and interest to women reentering the job market, and to discuss and solve problems connected with the experience in a supportive manner.

The primary immediate benefit reported by the participants was an increased sense of self-worth and confidence that they felt would be a major factor in helping them find employment. Most of them said they were greatly underestimating their own talents and achievements. The women said they realized this lack of confidence was an additional obstacle in the already difficult job search. The internship highlighted the fact that good jobs were not easy to find; but it also opened new avenues for meeting the problem. As their confidence increased, these women sought new contacts and opportunities that greatly enhanced their job search. One month after the experience, more than half were employed. One was still seeking employment and two decided to increase free-lance and volunteer responsibilities.

Educational programs designed for midlife women would be most successful if they considered not only the complexity of these women's lives but also the dilemmas that new expectations and new choices create. This study helps to identify those needs so that future programming may serve them more effectively.

Midlife women in our study were a particularly sensitive and intelligent group. They exemplified the highest sense of feminist activity, which is a commitment both to others and to themselves. They wrestled with the problems of competition versus community, of individuality versus sharing, and of risk versus tradition. They were sometimes lonely, scared, and uncertain. They were also alive, vibrant, and seeking. They reflected a knowledge that a complex life was also one rich in relationships. They expected to answer the original challenge of "What shall I do with the rest of my life?" with

the answer "I shall continue to learn, to be my own person, to care and share. I hope to be strong enough to measure success on my own terms and to convince society that roles for women and men need to be examined further to create full lives for all." Education with its ability to provide new options can be a major force in that change.

Table 1

Comparisons among percentages of three

age groups in their descriptions of current activities[a]

Activity	Age Group 25-36	37-45	46-60	$X^2(2)$
Homemaker and/or mother	38.9	58.3	65.7	38.54***
Unemployed and looking for work	3.4	6.2	6.9	2.80
Unemployed and not looking for work	5.1	10.4	14.7	11.83**
Working full time for pay at a job that requires a college degree	30.3	24.1	16.4	16.65***
Working full time for pay at a job that doesn't require a college degree	24.0	17.5	13.9	9.72**
Working part time for pay at a job that requires a college degree	13.7	15.6	11.3	2.70
Working part time for pay at a job that doesn't require a college degree	14.9	17.5	18.1	1.00
Working as a volunteer	19.4	30.1	39.8	25.66***

[a] Respondents could check as many of the categories they wished.

* $p \leq .05$

** $p \leq .01$

*** $p \leq .001$

Table 2

Comparisons among three age groups in their attitudes about career, self and family: Percentages of disagree, neutral, and agree responses[a]

Item	Age Group 25 - 36 D	25 - 36 N	25 - 36 A	37 - 45 D	37 - 45 N	37 - 45 A	46 - 60 D	46 - 60 N	46 - 60 A	χ^2 (8)
I believe I could be successful in several careers.	6.3	5.1	88.6	6.1	8.0	85.7	9.5	15.3	75.6	36.86 ***
I think it is possible to have a fully satisfying life without having children	12.0	14.3	73.7	27.8	19.3	52.9	34.3	22.4	43.3	60.43 ***
I do not feel women should seek paid employment.	96.6	1.7	1.7	96.2	1.9	1.9	93.4	3.9	1.9	31.00 ***
I feel women should have equal opportunities for careers.	2.3	0.6	97.1	3.3	0.9	95.7	5.3	1.9	92.8	45.71 ***
If a woman has children, her career should be interrupted while raising them.	42.0	45.5	12.5	41.7	38.9	19.5	22.6	40.9	36.6	79.26 **
I think there are some jobs which are more appropriate for one sex than the other.	43.8	24.4	31.8	42.7	12.3	45.0	19.1	18.0	62.9	81.43 ***
I think women should be totally responsible for the care of the home.	94.8	2.3	2.8	97.7	0.0	0.9	89.8	7.2	2.3	69.95 ***
I think I would feel comfortable in a family where the woman is the chief breadwinner, and the man is the homemaker.	32.0	24.6	43.4	36.0	22.7	41.2	46.5	28.5	25.0	37.35 ***
I believe a woman should always consult her spouse before making a personal decision.	73.2	18.3	8.5	79.5	7.6	12.9	73.4	13.9	12.8	19.48 *
I feel there could be problems if a woman is more highly educated than her spouse.	42.3	25.1	32.6	29.7	20.3	50.0	23.9	21.0	55.1	38.75 ***

[a]Responses collected on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree through strongly agree were used for the chi-square analyses among the three age groups. For purposes of reporting simplicity, the strongly disagree and disagree responses, and the strongly agree and agree responses were combined.

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$
*** $p \leq .001$

(Continued next page)

Table 2 (Continued)

Comparisons among three age groups in their attitudes about career, self and family: Percentages of disagree, neutral, and agree responses[a]

Item	Age Group 25 - 36 D	25 - 36 N	25 - 36 A	37 - 45 D	37 - 45 N	37 - 45 A	46 - 60 D	46 - 60 N	46 - 60 A	χ^2 (8).
I feel there could be problems if a woman earns more than her spouse.	38.8	26.6	34.7	23.7	28.4	47.9	17.2	23.3	59.4	47.32 ***
I think of myself as being a feminist.	14.9	21.7	63.4	14.8	18.6	66.7	20.6	30.6	48.7	38.07 ***
I have questioned my lifestyle and goals.	1.7	4.0	94.3	7.6	5.7	86.7	17.6	12.2	70.1	66.84 ***
I derive my primary satisfaction from my own accomplishments rather than from the accomplishments of others who are close to me.	9.7	12.6	77.6	13.9	10.1	75.9	22.8	18.3	58.9	60.04 ***
I prefer to follow traditional sex roles.	65.0	21.8	13.2	50.7	23.4	25.9	37.0	25.8	62.8	

[a]Responses collected on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree through strongly agree were used for the chi-square analyses among the three age groups. For purposes of reporting simplicity, the strongly disagree and disagree responses, and the strongly agree and agree responses were combined.

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$
*** $p \leq .001$

Table 3

Comparisons among three age groups in their assessment of the impact of Continuing Education for Women: Percentages of disagree, neutral and agree responses[a]

Item	Age Group									
	25 - 36			37 - 45			46 - 60			
Because of my experiences in Continuing Education for Women (CEW) . . .	D	N	A	D	N	A	D	N	A	χ^2 (8)
I assess my interests and abilities more realistically.	12.3	35.7	51.9	10.3	34.7	54.9	6.4	30.7	62.9	11.14
I am a happier person.	18.8	37.7	33.5	11.3	39.5	49.2	7.2	34.4	58.4	23.63 *
I have developed employable skills.	41.6	31.2	27.2	33.7	39.7	26.7	34.8	31.9	33.3	18.54
I feel better educated.	12.3	31.8	55.9	8.6	21.1	70.3	4.3	15.4	80.3	40.79 ***
I have become more open to new ideas and people.	7.8	37.9	54.2	9.2	30.3	60.6	4.6	18.3	77.1	42.13 ***
I have decided that I prefer to stay at home.	78.3	19.7	2.0	77.5	17.6	4.9	70.1	21.8	8.2	19.26 **
I am more confident about myself.	11.6	31.8	56.5	5.5	28.8	65.8	6.4	28.4	65.2	15.37
I feel more focus and direction in my life	19.8	40.8	39.5	12.5	40.0	47.6	11.4	38.4	50.2	15.35 *
I have a greater sense of my personal identity as a woman.	18.9	32.7	48.3	9.2	32.4	58.4	10.4	33.5	56.1	19.07 **
I have an increased respect and liking for other women.	12.4	41.2	46.4	6.4	29.2	64.3	6.5	33.1	60.4	18.42
I am no longer sure of my goals in life.	18.2	24.5	7.3	71.7	25.0	3.2	71.5	22.3	6.2	6.19

[a] Responses collected on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree through strongly agree were used for the chi-square analyses among the three age groups. For purposes of reporting simplicity, the strongly disagree and disagree responses, and the strongly agree and agree responses were combined.

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$
*** $p \leq .001$

(Continued next page)

Table 3 (Continued)

Comparisons among three age groups in their assessment of the impact of Continuing Education for Women: Percentages of disagree neutral and agree responses[a]

Item	Age Group									
	25 - 36			37 - 45			46 - 60			
Because of my experiences in Continuing Education for Women (CEW) . . .	D	N	A	D	N	A	D	N	A	χ^2 (8)
I have more options and alternatives available to me.	13.2	36.8	50.0	13.0	36.2	50.8	15.8	31.4	52.9	10.90
I feel that I am better able to relate to people.	13.2	41.1	45.7	8.7	42.9	48.4	9.4	35.6	58.0	14.21
I have a greater sense of personal satisfaction.	12.6	37.1	50.3	5.4	26.6	67.9	7.7	19.0	83.2	40.30 ***
I have a greater appreciation of art, music, and/or drama.	31.1	45.0	23.8	17.8	44.3	37.9	15.1	33.8	51.0	46.20 ***
I have learned new skills for personal enrichment.	18.0	26.7	55.3	10.3	39.7	50.0	13.8	28.1	58.1	13.98
I have a larger circle of friends.	41.3	41.3	17.3	23.0	47.3	27.4	22.8	42.8	34.5	30.64 ***
I have explored new ideas about the role of women.	15.2	37.1	46.8	16.9	31.0	53.2	16.2	27.8	56.0	16.28
I feel more restless and discontented with my life.	53.3	30.0	16.7	64.3	26.5	8.7	67.2	21.4	11.4	14.53
I have decided not to have paid employment.	79.3	19.3	1.4	78.7	18.0	3.3	64.6	23.7	11.7	47.82 ***
I have met other women who were similar to me.	18.6	27.2	54.3	9.2	28.5	62.3	10.3	20.1	69.6	18.80
I have less time for social activities	48.4	35.8	15.9	34.2	35.9	29.9	43.3	28.3	27.8	27.74 ***
Other people respect me more.	41.2	49.7	29.1	10.3	61.6	28.1	13.3	49.0	37.7	21.22 **

References

Arnott, C. C. Husbands' attitude and wives' commitment to employment. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1972, 34(4), 673-688.

Astin, H. S. (Ed.) Some action of her own: The adult woman and higher education. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1976.

Ballmer, H., and Cozby, P. C. Changes in family relationships when the wife returns to college. Paper presented at the Western Psychological Association Annual Meeting, Sacramento, California, April, 1975.

Bardwick, J. In Transition. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1979.

Barnett, R. C., and Baruch, G. K. Women in the middle years: A critique of research and theory. The Psychology of Women Quarterly. 1978, 3(2), 187-197.

Baruch, R., Segal, S., and Handrick, F. A. Constructs of career and family: A statistical analysis of thematic material. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1968, 15(4), 308-316.

Bean, J. P., and Wolfman, B. R. Superwoman, Ms. or myth: A study of role overload. Paper presented to Special Interest Group for Research on Women in Education, at the American Educational Research Annual Meeting, Boston, April, 1980.

Berkove, G. Returning women students: A study of stress and success. Paper delivered at the Western Social Science Association Annual Convention, University of Arizona, Tempe, Arizona, April, 1976. (a)

Berkove, G. Effects on the marriage when wives return to school. Paper delivered at the National Council on Family Relations Conference, New York, October, 1976. (b)

Bernard, J. The Female World. New York: The Free Press, 1981.

Bernard J. Women's continuing education: Whither bound? In H. S. Astin (Ed.) Some action of her own: The adult woman and higher education. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1976.

Brooks, L. Supermoms shift gears: Re-entry women. The Counseling Psychologist, 1976, 6(2), 33-37.

Cardozo, A. R. Woman at Home. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc. 1976.

Chodorow, N. Being and Doing: A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Socialization of Males and Females. In Vivian Gorneck and Barbara K. Moran (eds.), Woman in Sexist Society. New York: Basic Books, 1971.

Davitz, J. and Davitz, L. Making It: To and Beyond. Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1979.

Denmark, F., and Guttentag, M. The effect of college attendance on mature women: Changes in self-concept and evaluation of student role. Journal of Social Psychology, 1966, 69(81), 155-158.

Erikson, E. H. Inner and Outer Space: Reflections on Womanhood. In Robert J. Litton (ed.) The Woman in America. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967.

Farmer, H. S., and Bohn, M. J., Jr. Home-career conflict reduction and the level of career interest in women. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1970, 17(3), 228-232.

Felson, M., and Knoke, D. Social Status and the Married Woman. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1974, 36, 516-521.

Feree, M. M. The Confused American Housewife, Psychology Today, 1976(a), 10, 76 ff.

Geisler, M. P., and Thrush, R. S. Counseling experiences and needs of older women students. Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors, 1975, 39(1), 3-8.

Gilligan, C. Woman's place in a man's life cycle. Harvard Educational Review. 1979, 49(4), 431-446.

Glick, P. C. Updating the life cycle of the family. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1977, 39, 5-13.

Goodman, E. Turning points. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979.

Hall, D. T. Pressures from work, self, and home in the life stages of married women. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 1974, 6(1), 121-132.

Harris, J. The Prime of Ms. America: The American woman at forty. New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1975.

Hooper, J. O. Returning women students and their families: Support and conflict. Journal of College Student Personnel, 1979, 20(2), 145-152.

Howard, J. A Different Woman. New York: Avon, 1973.

Katz, J. Home life of women in continuing education. In H. S. Astin (Ed.), Some action of her own: The adult woman and higher education. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1976.

Katz, N., Lisker, R., Myers, M., and Peterson, B. J. The subject as subject: A study of the returning woman student. Council on Anthropology and Educational Quarterly, 1975, 6(3), 19-22.

Lazarre, Jo. The Mother Knot. New York: Dell, 1976.

Lever, J. Sex Differences in the Games Children Play. Social Problems, 1976, 23, 478-487.

Levine, V., and Moock, P. R. Labor force experience and earnings: Women with children. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, June 1978.

Levinson, D. The seasons of a man's life. New York: Knopf, 1978.

Loeffler, D., and Fiedler, L. Woman - a sense of identity: A counseling intervention to facilitate growth in women. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1979, 26(1), 51-57.

Lutter, J. M. The Minnesota Experience: Continuing Education for Women 1960-1978. In Women's Lives: New Theory, Research and Policy. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1980.

Manis, J. Transition to work: Who is satisfied and who is not? In Women's Life Cycle and Public Policy. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973.

Manis, L. G., and Mochezuki, J. Search for fulfillment: A program for adult women. Personnel and Guidance Journal. 1972, 50(7), 594-597.

Markus, H. Continuing education for women: Factors influencing a return to school and the school experience. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 078 296)

McGuigan, D. G. (Ed.,). New research on women and sex roles and the University of Michigan. The University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women: Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1976.

Miller, J. B. M. Toward a New Psychology of Women. Boston, Beacon Press, 1976.

Pleck, E. Sex roles in transition: The historical perspective. In D. McGuigan (Ed.), New research on women and sex roles at the University of Michigan. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1976, 6-24.

Pleck, J. H. The work-family role system. Social Problems, 1977, 24(4) 417-427.

Powell, B. The Empty Nest, Employment and Psychiatric Symptoms in College Educated Women. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 1977, 2, 35-43.

Rivers, C., Barnett, R., and Baruch, G. Beyond Sugar and Spice: How Women Grow, Learn and Thrive. New York: Putnam's Sons, 1979.

Rubin, L. B. Women of a certain age. New York: Harper, 1979.

Schletzer, U. M., Cless, E. L., McCune, C. W., Mantini, B. K., and Loeffler, D. L. A Five-Year Report (1960-65) of the Minnesota Plan for the Continuing Education of Women. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967.

Sheehy, G. Passages: Predictable crises of adult life. New York: Dutton, 1976.

Tittle, C. K., and Denker, E. R. Re-entry women: A selective review of the education process, career choice, and interest measurement. Review of Educational Research, 1977, 47(4), 531-584.

Verheyden-Hilliard, M. E. The use of interest inventories with the re-entering woman. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1974. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 095 369)

Women's Changing Roles at Home and On the Job, Special Report #26, Proceedings of a Conference on the National Longitudinal Studies of Mature Women, 1978.